

hiring authority for the Special IG for Pandemic Recovery and included in the forthcoming COVID legislation.

Now, I have heard rumors within the last hour that there has already been a decision that they are not going to move ahead on this money for hiring to get this job. If that is true, I don't want anybody, whether it is a Republican or a Democrat, to ever complain about something that comes to light, that the money wasn't spent the way it was intended to be spent or it was wasted here or wasted there. Don't complain to me.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

#### CLIMATE CHANGE

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, while Senator GRASSLEY is on the floor, I would thank him for his remarks about the First Step Act and let him know that on the Judiciary Committee, I look forward to working with him to continue to advance that.

As the Senate knows, the Grassley-Durbin segment and the Cornyn-Whitehouse segment were the two key pieces of that bill, and it is terrific to hear the Senator and our chairman at the time chose support to continue that work. So I am grateful.

What I would like to do now is to follow the conversation we had about oceans a minute ago in the context of my "Time to Wake Up" speeches.

Obviously, the oceans are taking a colossal beating from climate change, from the warming, from the chemical acidification that it causes. It is warming at a rate of multiple detonations of Hiroshima-level nuclear weapons per second in the ocean. That is the amount of heat that is added, if you want to put an image to it.

So we have done some good things on oceans in this Congress, and I would like to summarize some of those.

One, obviously, is Save Our Seas 2.0 that Senator SULLIVAN, Senator MENENDEZ, and I just discussed, but we also have a little package of enforcement provisions in the National Defense Authorization Act that focus on what is commonly called illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing—IUU fishing—which is a really boring and bureaucratic name for extremely bad behavior.

Essentially, it is modern slavery at sea for the crew, who are miserably trapped on these illegal, pirate fishing vessels. They are also an avenue for trafficking of humans, of narcotics, of arms, or whatever. Once you are out in a boat outside, beyond the realm of the law, operating illegally and doing whatever you can for money, you will do pretty much anything there is. So in addition to ransacking our common seas, these pirate fishing fleets are really dangerous vectors for really dangerous criminal conduct.

I am glad that we have put a little more heat on the Navy to up its game and report on its implementation of previously passed measures. I am glad

that we have directed the Navy to work with the Coast Guard, which has the substantive jurisdiction over all of this, and to work with the private sector involved in solutions to this. There are such things as private sector satellites that track the wake and the signal of these illegal fishing vessels, and coordinating that with our intelligence and our research I think will really help in fighting that battle, so that we are sharing the information that we can and gathering the information that we can to be more effective.

Finally, as I recall from my travels with the late Senator McCain, when you went to coastal countries near China, you always heard the same complaint. We went to the Philippines and heard it. We went to Vietnam and heard it. We went to Indonesia and heard it. There are probably others if I could remember more clearly that I could add to that list. But the complaint was that the Chinese fishing fleet is incredibly aggressive, it is trespassing into foreign sovereign waters, it is fishing illegally and outside of any respect for the domestic protections of these nations, and it is often violently protected by Chinese vessels, by navy or other vessels of the Chinese Government. So focusing on that as a place to push back and protect our oceans while at the same time diminishing this bad behavior by China is also a good thing.

So that was our suite of progress on pirate fishing in the NDAA.

In the omnibus, we expect at least \$75 million to go, for the first time, into a new fund to tackle ocean plastics and for ocean plastic work in the administration.

So those are bits of good news, and I am delighted that those things have happened. The less good news from this past year is that coasts remain sadly underfunded, and we have missed some real opportunities.

Two of the accounts that demonstrate how badly funded coasts are facing these threats from the changing oceans are the Land and Water Conservation Fund, which should properly be called the inland and freshwater conservation fund, and the Army Corps Flood and Coastal Storm Damage Reduction Fund.

If you go back and look at how this money actually gets spent, for every dollar that the Land and Water Conservation Fund spends in an inland State, in a landlocked State, per capita, it spends only 40 cents in a coastal State—a dollar per capita inland, 40 cents per capita coastal. And that actually understates the coastal discrepancy because it doesn't count the spending in coastal States that isn't on coasts. You have coastal States like New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas that have big, big upland inland areas in which most of the Land and Water Conservation Fund money goes.

So what we really ought to do is call this what it is, which is an inland and freshwater conservation fund, and have a parallel coastal and saltwater preser-

vation fund to make sure that coasts are treated fairly.

I did not even get the chance to ask for some adjustments to treat coasts more fairly as an amendment when we reconsidered the Land and Water Conservation in the so-called Great American Outdoors Act, which was frustrating because everybody—at least on my side of the aisle—talks a good game about how we need to have more amendments, we need to have more amendments. That deal got locked down before it got to the Senate floor. Nobody was allowed an amendment. So that was frustrating, but we will fight on because coasts need to be treated fairly, and with sea level rise and warming and fisheries moving about and storm surge worsening and more hurricanes, the dangers to coasts are greater than before, not less.

On the Army Corps account, that is even more extreme. If you go back through the last 10 years, the best year the coasts had in the flood and coastal storm damage account was 1 coastal dollar for every 19 inland dollars—1 coastal dollar for every 19 inland dollars. Tell me how that is fair to coasts facing those same risks. And that is the best year. The worst year was 120 times more for inland projects than for coastal projects—less than a penny on the dollar. Less than a penny on the dollar for America's coasts.

So we have a lot of work to do to make sure that we are doing what we need to do for our coasts. I am hoping that we can move the OFFSHORE Act—that there is even a faint chance of getting it done in the last few days. It had a successful hearing in Energy and Natural Resources. It has 19 bipartisan cosponsors, including Commerce Chairman WICKER, and it would treat wind energy offshore the same way for revenues that we treat oil drilling offshore—i.e., 37.5 percent to the nearby State, 12.5 percent to a dedicated fund. In this case, it would be the Oceans and Coastal Fund because it is oceans and coastal. It is one of the ironies that most of the money that comes off of coastal oil drilling—offshore oil drilling—gets moved into the Land and Water Conservation Fund, where it goes out West and is spent on inland, not coastal, projects.

So we continue to have real work to do. There is the BLUE GLOBE Act, which I have with Senator MURKOWSKI, on data monitoring in the oceans and Great Lakes—we are going to continue to push forward—and our Blue Carbon bill, which will help us address the changes in the oceans that climate change is wreaking. With Blue Carbon, things like growing mangroves are incredibly powerful as a carbon sink, kelp and sea grass—to get that research done and do the work we need to to deacidify our oceans while we still have reefs that are alive.

My ideal would be a "big blue bill"—a big blue bill that combines BLUE GLOBE, Blue Carbon, and others and,

for once, finally, finally, finally, finally, finally takes our oceans and coasts seriously.

I get that we are terrestrial mammals, but a lot of us care for our coasts, a lot of us care for our seas, a lot of our economies are dependent on our oceans, and the health of the planet is dependent on the cooling and on the oxygen that oceans provide. So we mess around with our oceans at our peril.

I hope that the Biden administration will take climate change as deadly serious as it needs to be taken and that it will step up a significant step from the degree of attention climate change got in the Obama administration.

We have to recognize the danger to our future if we remain negligent—it is that simple. And we have to make sure we free ourselves from the thrall of the fossil fuel industry's climate denial machine because the fossil fuel industry does not want what is best for America, does not want what is best for people, does not want what is best for oceans and the environment; it wants what is best for its profits, period, and end of story.

So we really, really, really, under the Biden administration, need a serious climate bill to safeguard the oceans on the only planet that we call home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today to unfortunately look back with sadness on the deadly toll of COVID-19 this year. I will focus my remarks on my home State of Pennsylvania, but of course the stories that I will relate about individuals we lost—of course many of them could be told in so many other States.

As of today, the middle of today, there have been some 301,264 deaths in the United States due to COVID-19, including 12,890—12,890—deaths in Pennsylvania. While I wish I could recognize and honor the memories of each of those individuals, that recognition, of course, would take longer than I have time set aside on the floor to speak, so instead I will share the stories of just 5 Pennsylvanians who have lost their lives to this terrible disease—5 stories, 5 families, from one corner of our State to the other, east to west, throughout our 67 counties.

#### REMEMBERING WALTER RASICH

The first person I will talk about is Walter Rasich. Walter moved into Whitehall Manor, which is a long-term care facility in Whitehall, PA. That is in Lehigh County, which is on the eastern border of our State, on the border just next to New Jersey, the so-called Lehigh Valley.

Walter moved into that long-term care facility in October of 2019. Wal-

ter's son Andy shared his story with my office.

Walter Rasich was a widower, and he has two sons and two daughters. He was a beloved grandfather to eight and a great-grandfather to seven. He was also an avid toy collector of Matchbox cars. Some of Walter's pastimes were working in the garage, hunting and fishing with his children, and also being with his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren.

Walter retired after 42 years, working as an electrical inspector for the steel industry.

Walter's nursing home locked down when the pandemic hit, and his family, like so many American families, was no longer allowed to visit. On April 20, 2020—that was a Monday—his son received a call that his father was going to the hospital with a fever of 102. Walter's family learned that Walter had passed away on April 24, just 4 days later—Thursday, April 24, 2020. He was 86 years old. They learned that he was the third resident of his nursing home to die of COVID-19.

So we express our condolences to Walter's family.

#### REMEMBERING KARIN PORTER

Karin Porter of Philadelphia spent 35 years as an investigator for the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which many know as the EEOC. As many people know, the EEOC is responsible for enforcing Federal anti-discrimination laws in the workplace and protecting workers and job applicants who have faced discrimination.

Karin was from Philadelphia, as I mentioned, and she raised her granddaughter Krystin. According to Krystin, Karin loved to travel. She loved to swim and to dance, and she was an avid shopper. Everyone loved Karin, and she was always the life of the party.

Karin got sick with COVID-19 right after her 69th birthday and died in April of this year.

In remembering her grandmother, Krystin said: "To know her, was to love her." Like so many families, as well, Karin's death was very sudden, and like too many others this year, all across our State and across the country, she has left behind a family in grief as they endure her passing.

So we send our sympathies and condolences to Karin Porter's family.

#### REMEMBERING ALLAN COHEN

Third, we go from one end of our State to the other, from Philadelphia all the way to Pittsburgh, to talk about a third Pennsylvanian. This individual's name was Allan Cohen.

Allan Cohen was a civil rights leader and advocate from Pittsburgh. He was 93 years old when he passed away on July 31 of this year.

Allan spent his life fighting for justice. As a young adult, he traveled to Mississippi to help Black voters to register to vote. He was here in Washington to hear the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have a

Dream" speech in 1963, part of the great March on Washington that year.

Allan was a lawyer. He went to the University of Pittsburgh, both for his undergraduate degree as well as for his law degree. He specialized in "fighting for the underdog," as his son Norman said in Allan's obituary, taking on personal injury cases for blue-collar workers, just by way of one example.

He was also a dedicated family man. Allan Cohen and his wife Lois were married for 66 years. They raised two sons. Allan's wife Lois contracted COVID-19 and has been fortunate to recover. Their family describes this couple as "the perfect match."

In retirement, Allan liked to audit classes at the University of Pittsburgh, his alma mater. He also liked to garden. His son Norm recalled "the best vacations" as a child, including a cross-country road trip. Once Norm and his brother Lawrence were grown up, they would take their father Allan and their mom Lois on vacations, instead, I guess as a way to return the favor for those vacations when they were young.

Allan's family remembers him, of course, as a civil rights advocate and a skilled orator who loved to travel. In the words of his granddaughter Molly, as quoted in his obituary, "What I admire most about my grandpa was his integrity and how he always made things light and fun." Molly went on to say: "When things in the world are unjust, Grandpa always speaks up and does what he can to make a difference."

In addition to his wife, sons, and granddaughter Molly, Allan left behind seven other grandchildren and one great-grandchild. So we are thinking today of Allan Cohen's family and offer our condolences and sympathies.

#### REMEMBERING DR. VICTOR RIVERA

Now we go back to the eastern side of the State, to Bucks County, PA, to talk about Dr. Victor Rivera, who was a retired pediatrician from Langhorne, which is in Bucks County, of course, just north of Philadelphia, very close to the New Jersey border as well.

Dr. Rivera practiced medicine for over 40 years, treating thousands of local children. He volunteered for medical missions and cared for children abroad. He leaves behind a loving family—his wife Mila, four children, and extended family all around the world.

Dr. Rivera was fondly remembered by his community after he died from COVID-19 complications in April of this year. They described Dr. Rivera as a father figure, someone dedicated to his patients but also his staff, who connected with his patients—in the words of one person, "a kind, gentle soul."

In some cases, Dr. Rivera treated multiple generations of the same family. When his patients grew up, they brought their own children back to his care.

Many commented on his big heart, his warm smile, and his "magical" singing voice. Even when he was hospitalized for COVID-19, Dr. Rivera was